



**State of Connecticut**  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
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## **Testimony for Rep. McGee: Support H.B. 5126**

Distinguished Chairs Senator Anthony Musto and Representative Ed Jutila, Vice Chairs Senator Edward Meyer and Representative Matthew Lesser, Ranking Members Senator Michael McLachlan and Representative Tony Hwang, Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee; I am State Representative Brandon McGee here to testify in support of H.B. No. 5126, "An Act Concerning An Agreement Among The States To Elect The President Of The United State By National Popular Vote."

Every one person's vote should be equal when electing our President. I support a national popular vote because it would make the equitable principle of "one person, one vote" a practical reality in U.S. presidential elections.

A national popular vote system would elect the presidential candidate who wins the most popular votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Participating states agree to award their electoral votes to the candidate who wins the overall popular vote. The National Popular Vote bill would take effect when the number of participating states represents a majority (270) of Electoral College votes, the number of electoral votes constitutionally required to elect the President.

Article II, Section 1 of the U.S. Constitution gives the states exclusive control over the manner in which they award their electors.

The current problem is with the "winner-take-all" rule used by 48 of 50 states. The result of the rule is an exclusive focus on only those "battleground" states that can be influenced in either direction.

Using the 2012 presidential election as a case in point: a staggering 80% of Americans were ignored. After his nomination, President Obama held campaign events in just eight closely divided "battleground" states, and Romney visited only

10. These 10 states received 98% of the \$940 million spent on campaign advertising. That means the voters in 40 of our 50 states were mere spectators.

A national popular vote system is the best way for us to respect the great democratic ideal of "one person, one vote." With this in mind, it is to take into account whether our current system serves the interest of all communities.

It is important to point out that minority populations are disproportionately on the wrong side of the "battleground" state equation. Minority populations represent more of the population in states that are ignored in presidential elections and therefore are less influential nationwide when it comes to who will be our next president. African-Americans, Latinos, and Asian-Americans alike are all more likely to live in fly-over states under our current system than the white population.

In 1976, 73% of African-Americans were in a classic swing voter position: living in a swing state (with a partisanship rating between 47 and 53%) in which African-Americans were at least 5% of the population. By 2000, that percentage of potential swing voters declined to 24%. In 2004, it was just 17% and in 2008, it was only 19%. Latino and Asian-American voters make up a much greater proportion of fly-over state population as it relates to swing states as well. Of course, the focus should not be on minorities for its own sake, but rather the fact that it reinforces the "one person, one vote" value that underlies the national popular vote proposal.

To take an even closer look at the counties in these states that are pivotal in determining their statewide results, *Business Insider* magazine in 2012 highlighted the "Eight Counties that Will Decide the Presidential Election." On average, of those eight counties, the minority vote is more than 7.5% less than the national average. This is a result of the fact that most swing counties are typically suburban areas with less minority population on the whole.

Our state should adopt this plan to ensure that our nation-leading state and people have an equal voice in the process of electing our president. Swing state status should not dictate whether or not our chief executive is weighing our concerns equal to others. The people of our state value free and fair elections that give everyone an opportunity to be heard. This plan does this while preserving our state's right to award electors. It is time to make this change and ensure that every voice in our state counts.